

**What is...**

# **Amateur Radio Emergency Service?**

The Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)/RACES is a group of Federally licensed Amateur Radio (slang = "ham radio") operators who volunteer their skills to assist public safety agencies in the event of a disaster or other incident.

During calamities such as earthquakes and hurricanes, the Amateur Radio Emergency Service/RACES has typically been among the first to respond, filling the communications void left by downed telephone lines and power outages - quickly linking and coordinating relief efforts. These activities are an integral part of the purpose of Amateur Radio as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC § 97.1(a); § 97.401(a)).

Amateur Radio is very different from "C.B.": Amateur Radio operators must pass a Federal examination and be issued a Federal license, which grants them "operating privileges" - such as the right to use high power transmitters (over a thousand watts), different modes (such as voice, Morse code, and even television), and thousands of frequencies. Furthermore, those Amateur Radio operators who are members of ARES/RACES are trained in emergency communications (and related skills) and are Registered Disaster Service Workers (DSWs). Members of ARES/RACES have very diverse backgrounds - but share the common goal of assisting when called upon by their communities.

In Santa Clara County, Amateur Radio Emergency Service is coordinated with the County Office of Emergency Services (OES). Statewide, Amateur Radio is integrated into the California Office of Emergency Services (CA OES) Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) and the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) (Cal. Code § 8607). In the event of a disaster, ARES/RACES Emergency Responders assist local fire, law enforcement, and other public service agencies by providing back-up communications resources.

Cupertino Amateur Radio Emergency Service (CARES) meets on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30pm in the Cupertino City Hall lower level conference room. Check-in net is at 7:15pm on Tuesdays 147.150 simplex PL=151.4

Further information is available on the Web: [www.cupertinoares.org](http://www.cupertinoares.org)

To obtain a Amateur Radio Technician License, purchase the "Now You're Talking" training manual from Radio Shack or the Ham Radio Outlet, 510 Lawrence Expressway, Sunnyvale (approximately \$20). Contact your local amateur radio organization for optional "cram" classes and test schedules.